Raising Your Children — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 25 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, June 16, 2024 · *The Patriarchs*

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All right, well thank you, Russell and Mary and choir for leading us in worship this morning. Thank you all for singing. Scripture encourages us not just to sing to the Lord, but to sing to one another. And there's certainly some encouragement that comes to my heart when I hear the singing of the saints, especially some of these great hymns and the rich theology that's in them. If you have your Bible, you can open it to the book of Genesis. We're going to be in Genesis chapter 25 this morning, trying to move a little bit more quickly as we work our way through this book of the Bible.

If you're new to Broadview, we typically preach through books of the Bible and we've been preaching through Genesis and kind of slowed down when we've gotten to the story of Abraham, and we've been looking at him as the founding father of faith, really the origin story of the three monotheistic religions of the world and we've seen how his life has really been a model for what not perfect faith looks like, but genuine faith. Genuine faith that trusts the Lord and sees the Lord come through even when there's a little bit of failure or weakness in us as human beings.

And over the last couple of weeks in particular, it's just been super practical as we've seen Abraham grieve the passing of his spouse. We've seen Abraham try to find a spouse for his child Isaac. And today we're going to see him marry again and then approach his death. And this will be the last hurrah in Abraham's life before the focus of Genesis pans and shifts to Isaac, the next son in the line of the promised seed that we've been tracing since Genesis chapter three. And I hope it'll be a helpful passage today as it relates to fathers.

Now I've got to be honest, I think we can all recognize that fathers play a pivotal role in our lives as people. I certainly know that to be the case with my dad. He's made a tremendous impact on me in so many positive ways. I'm so thankful to my dad because of his courage and bravery to do the hard things when it wasn't always easy to do and I've been a beneficiary of that. And because of it being Father's Day, I felt the temptation to shift away from Genesis and just preach a different text that's purely targeted on fathering.

And honestly it was tempting to do so. And this was VBS week, and so I was kind of throwing some ideas out there to different people trying to get some creative ideas for Father's Day and I just wasn't going anywhere. I went all day Monday, didn't go anywhere, went all day Tuesday and just hit a dead end. And so I came to Genesis chapter 25, assuming there wasn't much in there, because it's just the genealogy and Abraham dies. What is there to save our Father's Day from that? You're all going to die, guys.

So good luck. But as I slowed down and really dove into that chapter, I was just amazed at some of the truths that came off of the pages pertaining to fatherhood. And so I do want us to just keep plowing through Genesis 25, and it's just amazing in the sovereignty of God and the inspiration of the word of God that sometimes it knows what is relevant for us even better than we do. And I think that's certainly the case here with Genesis 25, landing on Father's Day with some very helpful reminders of what fathering is all about.

So let's pick it up in 25. We're going to start in verse 1, read down to verse six and we'll just work our way through the chapter. So it says in Genesis 25, verse 1, Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah, and she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan, and Dedan's sons were the Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim, and Midian's sons were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, and Abida and Eldaah. Y'all are loving this, aren't you? All of these were sons of Keturah.

Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac, but Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines, and while he was still alive he sent them eastward away from his son Isaac to the land of the East. Now it's easy to get tripped up on all those names and those names are difficult to pronounce for a reason. They were Hebrew names and we don't speak Hebrew around here, you know, we speak West Texas and so it can be difficult. But if you were to look at the words that repeat themselves over and over again, which I think is generally a good way to try to get to the main idea of any given text, the things that got repeated were the words son and father.

This is a genealogy and as a genealogy it's demonstrating how, really, what Moses is doing is trying to situate the Israelites with all the other nations around them because they're living where they're living and they've got all these people in all these other places and he's trying to help them figure out how those people got to where they were. And so you have genealogies not just here, but throughout the book of Genesis. And it can get very overwhelming because of all of the names and the begats and them begetting other begats.

And so this is just from the twelve patriarchs, starting with Noah, he's got his three sons, Shem, Japheth, and Ham that basically repopulate the earth. And we've been tracing the seed of promise really from there in Genesis six all the way down to Genesis twelve with Abraham and Abraham didn't just have Sarah. That was his given wife, you might say the matriarch, but he also ended up marrying Hagar, one of his concubines, and now you see

this other concubine named Keturah. She has her sons. Hagar had Ishmael, and Ishmael had these twelve sons, and then you've got Sarah who had Isaac, who then had Jacob and Esau, and they have all of those twelve sons which end up being the twelve tribes of Israel.

The point is Moses is trying to establish how things came to be. And it's a reminder, I think, for fathers, just at a very basic level, that your actions have consequences, not just for your life and not even for the life of your children, but for their children and their children after that. As a dad, your actions have a ripple effect to the third and the fourth generations. And what was so interesting to me about this text is how it kind of articulates powerfully those ripple effects for good or for ill.

And there are some principles for fatherhood that I think stem from this passage, just in those six verses that are very powerful to think on and meditate on as a dad. The first is that Abraham blesses Isaac, he gives Isaac this inheritance, but he also has this other wife named Keturah. Now it says that he had another wife, Keturah, after Sarah died. Chronologically it's after the death of Sarah, but most people believe that he didn't marry Keturah after Sarah died, but that Keturah was one of his concubines that he took while Sarah was alive, just like Hagar ended up being a concubine and not a true wife, at least not until he married her later on after the fact.

And so the reason I think that this is pretty evident to be the case, that Keturah was not an actual wife, is because she's referred to as a concubine later on in the Old Testament, but also because the sons of Keturah don't get the inheritance. The only person who gets the inheritance is Isaac, who is the only son between Abraham, who was the patriarch, and Sarah, who was the matriarch. These other two wives were not equal with Sarah in that way. Now, that is offensive to our sensibilities, but in that ancient Near Eastern culture, it was a pretty well-established custom that the sons or daughters of a concubine did not have equal standing with the sons or daughters of the matriarch and the patriarch, just as the wife of the patriarch didn't have the same standing as the concubines of a patriarch.

Now none of this was God's design, obviously from the beginning it was one man, one woman, one lifetime, one marriage. But, you know, they didn't all stick with that. Even so-called men of faith like Abraham deviated from God's design. I don't think it was something commendable, but what you see here is even though these sons and potentially daughters of these other wives are present, which is an indictment on Abraham's character, what you see Abraham do here at the end of his life is try to make it right to the best of his ability.

He honors the Lord by giving Isaac what was due him, which was the fullness of the inheritance. But he also gives these other children gifts and sends them away to the East. Now, why is that an act of generosity? It's an act of generosity because given those customs in the ancient Near Eastern world, those sons were really part of the estate. They were the inheritance because they were almost treated as a type of property because they weren't true

wives and they weren't true sons and daughters. And so the fact that he releases them from their obligation to, you know, serve on the homestead and keep things up like any other person would have done back then.

He not only sends them away in kind of giving them their freedom, but he sends them away with gifts and generosity. And I think this is, you know, there's a lot of different reasons why Abraham might have done that. He might have done that as a way to establish goodwill between these other children and Isaac, who is the son of promise. Maybe that was Abraham's way of ensuring that there were no threats to Isaac taking over the promised land. He wouldn't have to worry about his other brothers. Or maybe it was because Abraham was trying to make right a wrong that he had done in the past by saying, I can't change what I did back then, but what I can do is do the right thing now.

And that's kind of how I see him ending his life trying to make it right. And so what does that mean for us as fathers? At a very basic level, it's a reminder that as a father, you are going to fail your children. And I don't think there would be any dads in here who would say, I've never failed my children. Of course you've failed your children. It's part of being a human being. As a father, you're going to fail your children, but also as a father, it's a reminder that you don't have to let your past sins cast a permanent shadow on the lives of the next generation.

Your past sins are not their life sentence. It does not have to be that way. Now that's one of the reasons I'm thankful for my own dad, in taking some things, and not even things that were so much personal to him but kind of a family curse, if you will, a generational pattern of sin that he decided, I'm not going to project onto my children. And I know a lot of dads who have mistakes in their past, maybe mistakes similar to Abraham's sexual mistakes, sexual sin. You do not have to let them carry the guilt of that or the shame of that or the shadow of that for the rest of their lives.

You can do the hard thing now. Especially approaching the end of your life to say you are not accountable for the things that I've done. You don't have to carry the shame of the things that I've done in the past. You can be free of that and I'm going to do everything in my power so that you don't have to carry that baggage and I think this is a powerful example of Abraham doing that for these other sons of Keturah. And he did the same thing for Ishmael back in Genesis chapter 21.

So you're going to fail as a dad, but don't let your past sins cast a permanent shadow on the next generation. The next principle is in verses seven to eleven. It says that the length of Abraham's life was one hundred and seventy-five years, and then he... in the King James Version, he gave up the ghost. He took his last breath and he died at a good old age, old and contented, And he was gathered to his people. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah. Isn't that interesting?

Isaac and Ishmael come together to bury their father in the same cave that he purchased for his wife Sarah there at Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron, son of Zohar the Hethite. This was the field that Abraham bought from the Hethites. Abraham was buried there with his wife Sarah, and after Abraham's death God blessed his son Isaac, who lived near Beer-lahai-roi. So I made a joke earlier that what's the big takeaway from Genesis 25? You're about to die, so good luck. That is a point of Genesis chapter 25.

When it comes to being a dad, it's important to remember not just that you're going to fail your children, so don't let your past sins cast a permanent shadow. But to always father mindful of the reality that you will one day leave your children. One day your children will have to bury you. And so you want to live in such a way that the actions of today have that end date in mind. There are leadership books that talk about how to win big and how to accomplish your goals. And one of the principles that I learned way back when reading some of those books is that when you begin a project you want to begin with the end in mind and that's what you see here with Abraham.

He's living with the end in mind. When I say the end in mind, I don't just mean the end of his life and his sons having to bury him or how his actions today were going to impact his next generation, though that's certainly true. I say live with the end in mind and the reality of how Abraham was living not with the temporary end of his life here on earth, but with the ultimate end of life forever with God in heaven. We've seen this several times in our journey through the book of Genesis with the life of Abraham, that he was living for the city that was to come.

In Hebrews chapter 11, verse 10, that he was looking forward to the city that had a builder, whose architect was God and whose foundations were established by the Lord. That was the world that he was living for. That's why he lived the life of faith that he lived and made the sacrifices that he made, held loose to the things of this world, doing the right thing, following God's leadership because he was living with the end in mind. And I think that's instructive for us as dads to be reminded that one day you're going to stand before God in heaven.

You're going to give an account for the way that you've lived your life and you want to live in such a way now so that it doesn't communicate to your offspring or to the watching world that you're living for this world, but rather you're living for the world that is to come. And so you can hold loose the things of this world, knowing I'm just an alien, I'm a sojourner, I'm passing through, but one day I will come to my forever home. And I really think that's why Ishmael and Isaac are together at the tomb of their father Abraham.

All of the enmity, all of the baggage, all of the stuff was now just water under the bridge because they had a father who modeled for them. It's not about what happens in this world. It's not about the petty things that happen as a result of sin in this world. We're living for the world that is to come. So live with the end in mind. And how do you do that as a dad? I think

the way that you do that is the way that Abraham did that. And that is to not let the urgent choke out the important.

I read a book in college called Tyranny of the Urgent. It's really a book on how to manage your time, but I think it's a pretty good principle as it relates to just living life in general that there are all kinds of pressing matters in life. They're pushing in on you. Do this, do that. This is the most urgent thing. And if you're not careful as a dad, you can let the urgent squeeze out what's most important. What's most important is the investment that you're making into the lives of your children.

It's your emotional availability. It's you spending time with them. I heard someone say just this week that girls were made to be held by men, which is kind of a chauvinistic thing to say, but as I thought about it, I thought of my little girl Addie Jo always wanting me to hold her, or, you know, when she was ready to go to sleep at night, she says, Come hold me so that I can go to sleep. And the other thing that guy said is if you don't hold them now, they're going to look for some other guy to hold them later, which is kind of a shocking thing to think about.

I don't want no other man holding my little girl. But the point I think remains that there are the important things in life and the most important thing is not finishing the project or meeting some deadline or making some random amount of money but to pour into the people that God has put around you to steward that responsibility to be faithful to those that God has entrusted into your care. And Abraham I think did that well. And that's again why his two sons who had lots of reasons to not be there with one another are there because he didn't let the urgent crowd out what was most important.

So fathers, you're going to fail your children, don't cast a permanent shadow, and you're going to leave your children. So let the important outweigh the urgent. The next thing we're going to see is how fathers shape their children. That's in verses 12 to 18. So you see in verse 12, it's really the literary marker of the book of Genesis. It's translated, these are the family records of and all of the big divisions in the book of Genesis are headed up by this little phrase. These are the family records of Abraham's son Ishmael, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's slave, bore to Abraham.

These are the names of Ishmael's sons. Here we go. Their names according to the family records are Nebaioth, Ishmael's firstborn, then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are Ishmael's sons, and these are their names by their settlements and encampments. Now circle this phrase. The twelve tribal leaders of their clans. This was the length of Ishmael's life, 137 years. He took his last breath and he died, and then he was gathered to his people. And they settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite of Egypt, as you go towards Asshur.

And then he stayed near all of his relatives. So you see this genealogical record of Ishmael's sons. Now, what is typical in the book of Genesis is that Moses will spend the vast majority of time on the family records of the seed of promise, and so most of the attention was given to Abraham, and then after that most of the attention will be given to Isaac. But he does give the genealogical records of everybody that plays a part in the story. So he's going to give a genealogical record for Ishmael.

Even though he wasn't the son of promise, he was the son of compromise between Abraham and Hagar, he gets this pitch. And he also gets his mom included, which was pretty rare for family records in the book of Genesis. She makes an inroad and I think the reason is because she demonstrated faith when she returned back to Abraham's house, even though she had every reason to stay away, she trusted the Lord. Why? Because she was confident that the one who saw her was going to keep his promise. And he did.

And you see the fulfillment of God's promises right here in this genealogical record in two ways. Number one, because it says that Ishmael had twelve sons who became twelve tribal leaders. And this was a direct fulfillment of prophecy that was given in Genesis chapter 17, verse 20. God tells Abraham, when Abraham's saying to the Lord, why don't you take Ishmael? Why can't Ishmael be the one? I can't have a son with my wife Sarah. Why not Ishmael? And he says, He's not the one, but I am going to bless him.

I'm going to make him a great nation. And 12 tribal leaders are going to come from him. So this is God making good on that promise to Abraham. But it's also making good on a second promise, which gets to the main point of why I think this little thing is in the book of Genesis, which is that as a dad, you are going to powerfully shape your children in ways that no other person can. You have a superpower as a dad to shape the life of your children. Now where you see that in Genesis is in this little phrase, he settled near his relatives.

It's right at the end in verse 18. He stayed near all of his relatives. Now, some translations will not say he stayed near his relatives. They will say that he was opposite, or that he settled against his relatives, not in terms of geography, but in terms of hostility. And it's just basically how you translate that Hebrew word. But that is a fulfillment of a prophecy that was given in Genesis 16, when it says of Ishmael that he will be like a wild donkey. Don't you love hearing that when you're about to have a baby?

He'll be a wild donkey. His hand will be against everyone. And everyone's hand will be against him. And he will, notice the phrase, settle near all of his relatives. Now the CSB translates it as geography. But I think the better way to translate it is not geographically, but temperamentally. That because of Ishmael's character, because of maybe even the influence that he got from his mother, who is extremely hostile towards Sarah because of the way that he came about, he ended up passing that same mindset on to his children, who likewise settled not near their relatives, but in a way that was antagonistic towards their relatives.

And when you read the rest of the book of Genesis and the rest of the Old Testament in general, what you see is hostility between the people of Ishmael's descendants and the descendants of Abraham. And so you see, as a dad, you're going to shape your children. For good or for bad, you're going to shape your children. You see this in the book of Genesis with Cain who murdered his brother Abel. And Cain has children after that, and the children who are in the line of Cain bear the mark of that kind of vengeance.

Up to the point that Lamech, who is I think Cain is his great-great-great-great-grandfather, the fourth generation, it says of Lamech that if Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then my revenge is seventy-sevenfold. In other words, it's 11x. The hostility that I received from my great-great-great-great-grandfather, I'm carrying on today. Now some people talk about this in terms of a generational curse. I don't believe the Bible teaches generational curses because Ezekiel chapter 18 contradicts that. It says that God does not hold the next generation accountable for the sins of the father. But even though the Bible doesn't teach generational curses, it does teach that there is a way in which fathers can establish a generational pattern of sin.

That there are vices that you can cave into as a dad that if you're not careful are going to find themselves repeated over and over and over again into the lives of your children and their children and their children after them. You see this pretty obviously with things like alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual abuse, anger issues; these are things that are often repeated from the father to the son that is passed on. Why? Because you have a superpower as a father to shape your children, unlike any other person can. And your influence for good or for bad is going to shape them.

You see the bad here? Is that to say that there was nothing good Ishmael did for his kids? No, I'm not saying that. Obviously. You know, he passed on some good qualities and just like Abraham probably passed on some bad qualities, but you see a juxtaposition between Abraham and Ishmael because what Abraham passes on is a positive, if you look in verses 19 to 21. It says that these are the family records of Isaac, son of Abraham. Abraham fathered Isaac. Isaac was 40 years old when he took his wife Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan-aram, and sister of Laban the Aramean.

Or however you say that. Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife because she was childless, just like his mom was childless. And the Lord was receptive to his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. And so what you see here is Ishmael passing on a curse to his next generation, not in that God held them accountable for Ishmael's sin, but that there was a generational pattern of sin because of his life. But with Abraham you see a generational pattern of faith. Abraham modeled for his son Isaac what genuine faith looks like when life is really challenging, when God's not answering your prayer.

How do you respond? You respond with perseverance, endurance, keep trusting the Lord. Abraham and Sarah had to wait 25 years for the son of promise, Isaac, to finally be born. And I think what you see is Isaac received the inheritance of that faith. Because he waits 20 years with his wife Rebekah. We see later that he's 60 years old. Verse 26 says he's 60 years old when Esau and Jacob are born. So he goes 20 years trusting the Lord, waiting on the Lord, hoping and enduring in his faith because he received that as a blessing from his father.

Just like in Genesis 22, you see his confidence in the resurrection that he doesn't resist his father offering him up as an offering to the Lord because he had inherited his father's faith. That if God promised it, then God will be faithful. So for good or for bad, you are passing on something to your children. Don't pass on a curse. Choose to pass on a blessing. Your children for good or for bad are going to emulate what they see modeled in the home. And I don't think you have to be a rocket scientist to see that, but this is just affirmation from God's word that you want to be careful what you're modeling.

What is your influence on the next generation? What is it that they see? From there on, really for the rest of the chapter, the focus shifts from Abraham to the son of promise who is going to be Jacob and Esau. Jacob more so than Esau. It says when the children inside of her struggled with each other, Rebekah goes, she inquires of the Lord, why is this happening to me? So she went to inquire of the Lord, and the Lord said to her, two nations are in your womb, two people will come from you and will be separated.

One people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger. And then when her time came to give birth, there were indeed twins in her womb. The first one came out red looking, covered with hair like a fur coat, and they named him Esau. And then after this his brother came out, grasping Esau's heel with his hand. And so she named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born. When the boys grew up, Esau became an expert hunter, an outdoorsman, but Jacob was quiet and stayed at home.

So Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for wild game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. And once, when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field exhausted, and he said to Jacob, Let me eat some of that red stuff, because I'm exhausted. And this is why he was also named Edom. And Jacob replied, first, sell me your birthright. Look, Esau said, I'm about to die. So what good is a birthright to me? Jacob said, then swear it to me first. And so he swore to Jacob, and he sold his birthright to him.

Then Jacob gave bread and lentil stew to Esau. He ate, drank, got up, went away, and so Esau despised his birthright. This is a big event in the book of Genesis that we're going to look at in its own right, but I thought it was fitting for Father's Day because of this dynamic that I imagine Isaac would have felt. You see Rebekah, she's pregnant, she's got this tummy ache. What's going on in my belly? So she goes to the Lord, what's going on? The Lord graciously tells her what's going on.

You don't often get this, you know, when you're pregnant, ladies. You can't just ask the Lord what's going on. He's not doing that for everybody. But he does that for Rebekah. And he says, you have twins, number one. Number two, I have a plan for these two babies. The older is going to serve the younger, and one of them is going to be more powerful than the other. And sure enough, God's purpose prevails, right? The boys are born, there is a difference between the two, there is even a little bit of favoritism between Isaac and Esau and Rebekah and Jacob.

But the point is that what God prophesied over those boys did come to pass. And I think that's a really helpful reminder for us as fathers and mothers, but for fathers in particular, that you are going to one day have to release your children to the plan and the purpose of God. That's not to say that your decisions don't matter. They do. Obviously they do. The free will choices of Isaac and Rebekah and how they parented, for good or for bad, I think had a... The point is that your influence is not the only influence.

Your purposes are not the only purposes. In fact, your purposes are secondary to the purposes of God because it is only the purposes of God that will ultimately prevail when it comes to the life of your children. And so I'm sure Isaac had plans for Esau. You know, it was his favorite. He, you know, he's a good hunter and he's going to become this kind of a man. I'm sure Isaac believed those things about his son, but the point is he couldn't control his son's actions eventually. Dads, you are responsible to train your children and to shape them and to instill in them virtue and faith.

But at the end of the day, your children are responsible to God for their actions, and your children will ultimately stand or fall for what they do, not for what you do. I think the way I phrase it in your notes is that you can train a child up, but you can't control their outcome. You can't control their destiny. And in this case, one was destined to be a certain thing and the other was destined to be a different thing. And the same is true in your children. I think that's kind of liberating in some ways because as a dad you can realize the best things about my children are not praiseworthy on me, nor are the worst things about my children condemnatory on me.

Ultimately, I've released them into the hands of a capable and faithful father. And so you're going to release your children to the plan and purpose of God. So do everything you can to train them for the journey. So don't get so anxious that you try to control their future. So you can cast a shadow; try and remove it. You can be distracted; try to remove those. You are going to shape your children for good or for bad, so try to communicate a blessing and not a curse. And you're going to have to release your children ultimately to the hands of God.

Now there are ways in which all of us can probably take those four principles and apply them to our lives as fathers. Certainly some of those will be more pressing than others based on your season of life. What's probably true of most of us is that of those four points, all of us in

this room find some degree of inadequacy or failure that we've committed as fathers. And I think what's so beautiful about the book of Genesis is that even through the failures of an earthly father, you see the providence and the faithfulness of a heavenly father who never fails.

He never fails his children. He is always faithful. We have a heavenly father who is the everlasting father, as Isaiah says. He never leaves. He will never leave us. He will never forsake us. He will always be present for his children. We have a heavenly Father who shapes us only for good and not for ill. He never communicates a curse. He only communicates a blessing to those who are committed to him and who walk in his designs. And the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father is most preeminently seen in His fatherly relationship with His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as we're going to celebrate in the Lord's Supper, laid down his life willingly as a sacrifice, because what you see in the Son is what you see in the Father.

The love and the grace and the mercy of the Father are preeminently displayed in the life of the Son. And so if you feel as a father like a failure, because honestly you did fail your children, and you didn't communicate a blessing with everything in your life and you're maybe not prepared to die and leave your children because you've got some of these loose ends that need to be tied up. The reality is this morning there's an invitation for you from your Heavenly Father to come to the Lord Jesus Christ and find forgiveness for those failures.

To find wisdom and strength, to communicate a blessing and not a curse, to find life eternal, so that as you face death, you don't face it with fear or anxiety, but that you can face it old and contented, or maybe young and contented, but contented nonetheless, because this world isn't your home. You found a home in Jesus. And so if you haven't believed on him for salvation, I would encourage you to do so today before we take the Lord's Supper. I do want us to spend a little bit of time as Mary comes and leads us through a time of invitation to respond to the Lord in light of his word.

If there is a need for repentance in your life this morning, to repent before the Lord before you take the Lord's Supper, as the Scripture encourages us to do so in a worthy manner, examining ourselves before we eat or drink of the cup. And if there's any way that I can pray with you or for you, I'd be happy to do that. You can scan that QR code and put in any prayer request or things that you're wanting to have a conversation about. But let's use this time to respond to the Lord in light of his word and to find hope and healing in his fatherly love for us and his fatherly care for us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, we do thank you for this word and even the text of Scripture that can feel a little bit boring on the surface are sometimes the thing we need the most to be reminded of the basic realities that we are broken human sinners who will one day die and stand before

you in judgment. That our actions don't just affect us, but they affect the people around us. But thanks be to God that even though we are weak and sinful, even though our hearts can be depraved, you have made atonement for us through Jesus.

You have forgiven us. You have reconciled us. You have made us alive so that we can not just find life, but to communicate life, to not just have the curse removed, but to have a blessing bestowed on us that we can then give to the next generation. And so we pray for our fathers this morning. We pray that they would find the salvation and eternal life that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. And we pray that in strengthening them and rescuing them, that they would be able to help raise up a new generation of sons and daughters who know the Lord, who love the Lord, and who themselves pass on that faith to the next generation and the generation after that.

And so, Holy Spirit, would you use your word now as we respond to create faith and obedience in the heart of your people? And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.